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Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph on page 1, lines 6-13, with the following amended paragraph:

This invention is a continuation-in-part and claims ~~priority benefit~~ of U.S. Serial No. 09/553,927, filed April 21, 2000, now abandoned, and U.S. Serial No. 10/426,415, filed April 30, 2003, now abandoned, which claims priority of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/376,984, filed April 30, 2002, and U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/494,721, filed August 11, 2003, the contents of which are hereby incorporated by reference into this application.

Please replace the paragraph on page 48, lines 7-21, with the following amended paragraph:

An issue not addressed in this study is whether FC-mediated death is due to apoptosis or necrosis (35). While the distinction between these two modes of death may not always be clear (36,37), Rothblat and colleagues (18) have presented preliminary evidence that FC loading of macrophages results in the appearance of some apoptotic features in the cells. Using a variety of assays, we have recently shown that FC loading leads to an early apoptotic response followed by later necrotic changes ~~(Yao et al., manuscript in preparation)~~. Because necrotic as well as apoptotic features are decreased in FC-loaded macrophages from NPC1 mice (data not shown), we conclude that normal peripheral FC transport is required for both forms of death. Of note, macrophage death in atherosclerotic lesions shows features of both apoptosis and necrosis (1).